

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 3282

As Reported by House Committee On:
Select Committee on Hood Canal

Title: An act relating to the Hood Canal aquatic rehabilitation account.

Brief Description: Establishing the Hood Canal aquatic rehabilitation account.

Sponsors: Representatives Eickmeyer, Green, Haigh, Appleton, Kilmer, O'Brien, Lantz, McCoy, Chase, Miloscia, Clibborn and Ormsby.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Select Committee on Hood Canal: 2/2/06 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes the Hood Canal Aquatic Rehabilitation Account to be used to support programs and projects to protect and restore Hood Canal.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOOD CANAL

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Eickmeyer, Chair; McCoy, Vice Chair; Pearson, Ranking Minority Member; Sump, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Chase and Walsh.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

Hood Canal

Hood Canal is a glacier-carved fjord approximately 60 miles in length with approximately 180 miles of shoreline. Portions of Hood Canal have had low-dissolved oxygen concentrations for many years. In 2005, authority was provided to establish aquatic rehabilitation zones (ARZs) for areas whose surrounding marine water bodies pose serious environmental or public health concerns. The first ARZ, known as ARZ One, was created for the watersheds that drain into Hood Canal south of a line projected from Tala Point in Jefferson County to Foulweather Bluff in Kitsap County.

Hood Canal Rehabilitation Program

The Puget Sound Action Team (PSAT) is a state agency that develops and coordinates water quality programs for Puget Sound. The Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) is a group of county and tribal governments established to address water quality problems and natural resource issues in the Hood Canal watershed. The Legislature authorized development of the Hood Canal Rehabilitation Program (HCRP) in ARZ One in 2005. The PSAT is designated as the state lead agency for the HCRP. The HCCC is designated as the HCRP's local management board. The PSAT and HCCC must jointly coordinate a process to prioritize projects, studies, and activities based on the likely value in addressing and resolving Hood Canal's low-dissolved oxygen concentrations.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Hood Canal Aquatic Rehabilitation Account is created in the State Treasury. The account may be used only for programs and projects to protect and restore Hood Canal, including implementing the HCRP.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill removes the transfer of 50 percent of the funds from the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account from July 1, 2007, until July 1, 2017.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (In support of substitute bill) As projects come forward, as identified by the science and monitoring efforts in Hood Canal, a funding source is needed to fund those projects. By establishing the Hood Canal Rehabilitation Account, the process to prioritize and implement projects, similar to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board process, can move forward in Hood Canal. In the substitute bill, the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account revenue transfer is removed from the bill. New funding resources are needed to restore Puget Sound and Hood Canal, including federal funds and private donations. By creating a dedicated account for Hood Canal, the likelihood of securing funding is increased. The structure to prioritize and fund projects established last year is ready to be implemented.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support of substitute bill) Representative Eickmeyer, prime sponsor; Keith Dublanica, Skokomish Indian Tribe; Fran McNair, Department of Natural Resources; Bruce Wishart, People for Puget Sound; and David Christensen, Hood Canal Coordinating Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.